

New ALN Legislation in Wales

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Welsh Assembly Government (2004) Code of Practice set in Wales was introduced in April 2002. The Code of Practice includes rights and duties that should be followed based on Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 which ensures children with a disability or additional learning needs are to be educated within mainstream settings. Dauncey (2016) concludes the term Special Educational Needs (SEN) to change to Additional Learning Needs (ALN). A new ALN Transformation programme was created in 2018 that will replace the current SEN code of practice within the upcoming years and is presented through five concepts with a focus on 11 aims practitioners must follow. Training will be delivered and administered early in 2020 which will be followed through until 2023. Practitioners will be transferring children from Individual Educational Plans to Independent Developmental Plans, however continuing to consider the current Code of Practice. The purpose of the transformation programme is to provide an inclusive system which requires multi agencies working together. The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 includes all practitioners play a role in supporting and teaching those with ALN (Welsh Government, 2021). Relevant training and guidance will be provided by Welsh Government. Including advanced training to further knowledge of currently setting Special Educational Need Coordinators (SENCOs) which will be replaced to a new title Additional Learning Needs Coordinators (ALNCOs) (Welsh Government, No Date).

A Unified Plan

Focuses on developing one statutory plan which will be called an Individual Development Plan (IDP) which will replace current range of statutory and non-statutory Special Educational Need or Learning difficulty and disability plans for children and young people within education (Welsh Government, 2020) Snap Cymru (2021) concluding that within the new transformation programme it can allow practitioners to create and support children using an IDP until the age of 25 for those who are continuing education. An IDP will include contact information and appropriate professionals that are involved. It will also contain a section which provides information on 'how to support' the child alongside an action plan which will include what is and is not working for the child (Snap Cymru, no date). Lewallen, et al. (2015) states that a positive aspect of the ability of accessing information to support children's development can allow practitioners to further development opportunities which can provide an understanding to the child which requires support. Welsh Government (2014) states that there are meetings to review a child's IDP on agreed dates which involves parents, children and other professionals involved to meet with the practitioner and the settings ALNco to assess the current IDP in place as this allows the practitioner to gain a wider understanding of what will be required on the IDP. However, Childre and Chambers (2005) points out that despite practitioners creating IDP's and providing regular meetings which involves parents and carers in some cases this can present as a difficulty as for some parents can find it challenging coming to an agreement based on the outcomes required which can cause challenges for practitioners who have set dates in place which require the review to be complete for the local authorities.

Increased Collaboration

Welsh Government (2021) within the current code of practice there are limitations that are presented for practitioners that prevents practitioners to collaborate to provide the best outcomes. The aim is set to encourage and enhance collaboration and the information that is shared between different professions ensuring that the correct identification of needs is identified early and that the support practitioners provide is implemented for children is in place early to enable to the best of their abilities (Welsh Government, 2020). Care Act 2014 has a primary focus involving local authorities who ensure liaison takes place between services accessible for children and young adults set to further the incorporation of support and care within health care services (Legislation, No Date). Council for disabled children (No Date) indicate within early years a range of practitioners participate in the care of a child with additional learning needs, to provide positive outcomes, the participation in which professionals have is key in improving the outcomes that are provided. Walker (2018) demonstrates the importance of practitioners working together stating that it is the duty of all staff to come together to focus on providing the best quality care. However, Khairuddin, Dally and Foggett (2016) research study discusses that within planning aspects of settings work that has been developed by practitioners which provides a limit to the input towards inclusion of those with ALN. Peel and Rowley (2020) who also highlight that an aspect of working together requires practitioners to use a range of tools and skills, an aspect that can provide a barrier. Goulet, Krentz and Christiansen (2003) indicates that through aspects of collaboration with staff and other professions, practitioners are open to opportunities to further develop their knowledge and gain a wider understanding to other areas of expertise.

0-25 Age Range

SNAP Cymru (2021) Currently the support provided by practitioners that is in place within settings covers children within statutory education and educated between the ages 16 and 19. Welsh Government (2018) state that within the new legislation one system will be put in place for practitioners to support children and young people between the ages of 0 to 25 with Additional Learning Needs replacing the current two separate systems. Supporting the Children and Families Act 2014 which allocate responsibilities upon local authorities to ensure effective practice is taken place. The aim also provides practitioners with opportunities to explore and gain awareness of different stages and ages of development for children. Demonstrated by O'Brain (2015) the process in which is considered within planning for those with ALN requires a greater understanding from professionals within different areas to work cooperatively. According to the Department of Education (2015) through the 0-25 age range it allows practitioners to focus on providing the ability to appoint support for children and young adults at the focus of all aspects which can allow those with special educational needs to progress within education and a positive transition into adulthood. Indicated by Marggerts and Kienig (2013) transition is a process that occurs within daily aspects of a person's life however it is an experience that can cause a long-lasting impact. Lopez, et al. (2015) concludes that for practitioners within practice there are a range of similarities and differences that can be portrayed while supporting a range of ages and transitional aspects. Jaffee, et al (2018) research found that for practitioners whose knowledge was limited caused a disadvantage to the overall care that was able to be given. Furthered by Roberts and Griffin (2009) research concluded that for practitioners who have limited access to knowledge and understand that is set in practice to support can cause a barrier which prevents progression and positive opportunities.

There are eleven aims that are presented within the new transformation programme. As demonstrated within the presentation there are many implications within the aims which provides practitioners with advantages and disadvantages to the upcoming changes set for Wales by 2023. However, settings are currently still following the SEN code of practice. The aim provides practitioners to increase the collaboration which allows information sharing to be in completed greater depth, the aim also allows practitioners to work closely in one format for children aged 0-25 using one supporting system and replacing IEP's to IDP'.